

Research Memorandum

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Post-Moscow Flash Survey:

WEST EUROPEANS AGREE SUMMIT REDUCED TENSIONS,
ARE SATISFIED WITH PACE OF START TALKS;
FRENCH AND GERMANS BACK PRESIDENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS CRITICISM

This report is based on USIA-sponsored telephone surveys June 6-9, 1988, in Britain, France and West Germany. National samples of 500 adults were interviewed by reputable institutes in each country.

Reduced Tensions Seen As Main Benefit of Recent Summit

Consistent with their modest expectations*, West European publics give the Moscow Summit higher marks for reducing East-West tensions than for the more substantive work of resolving regional conflicts or improving respect for human rights (Table 1).

Unprecedented majorities (ranging from 78% to 89%) now rate Soviet-American relations as good (Figure 1). Many (51% to 63%) believe that a general reduction of international tensions is the main result of those improved superpower relations -- rather than any specific benefits to their countries.

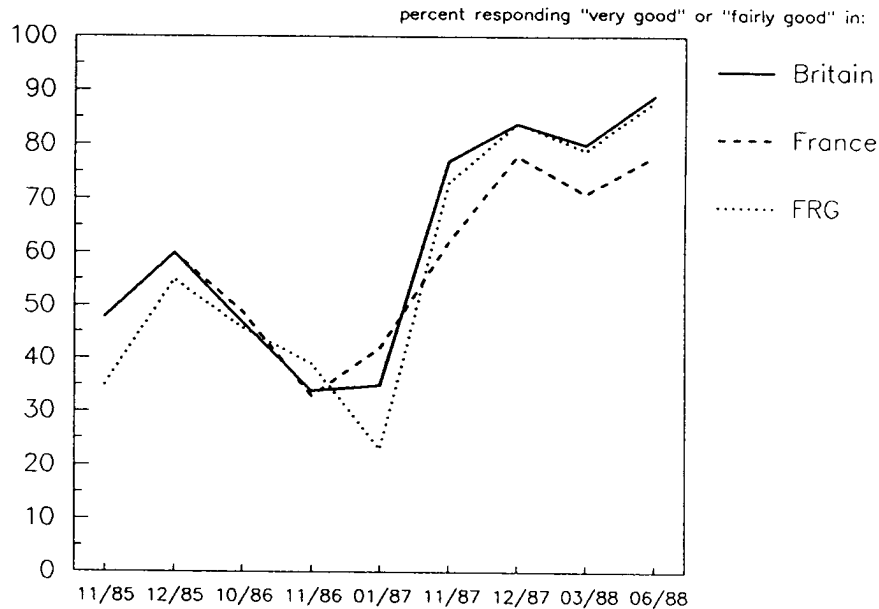
French and Germans Approve Reagan's Moscow Emphasis on Human Rights

Glasnost notwithstanding, few people (14% to 25%) in these three countries believe individual freedoms are well protected in the Soviet Union. Somewhat larger proportions, but still minorities (26% to 43%), think the Moscow Summit accomplished much to improve those conditions. But a strong majority in Germany (74%), and a clear plurality in France (52-33%), believe it was appropriate for President Reagan to criticize the Soviet Union on this issue during the summit. Only in Britain does opinion narrowly disapprove (Table 2).

*Expectations for the Moscow Summit are reported in M-4/4/88, "Overwhelming Support for INF Treaty Continues As West Europeans Set Sights on START."

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TABLE 1: VAST MAJORITIES IN WESTERN EUROPE JUDGE U.S./SOVIET RELATIONS TO BE GOOD



Question: "How would you describe current relations between the United States and the Soviet Union? Would you say relations between these two countries are very good, fairly good, fairly bad, or very bad?"

Europeans Still Place Priority On START, Are Satisfied With Pace of Negotiations

With the INF treaty ratified, West Europeans say a reduction of strategic nuclear weapons should be the next arms control objective. A majority in France (58%) and pluralities in Germany (41%) and Britain (52%) prefer the emphasis on START rather than on reducing conventional forces in Europe or reducing short-range nuclear forces in Europe. These preferences are little changed from March, when INF ratification was still pending.

Europeans appear to be following arms control developments rather closely. Proportions ranging from 46 percent in Germany to 60 percent in Britain say they have heard or read at least a fair amount about negotiations "to reduce long-range nuclear weapons," and most of the remainder have at least heard of them. Significant minorities -- roughly one-in-three -- are disappointed that a treaty wasn't concluded in Moscow, but the predominant opinion in each country (39% to 61%) is that the negotiations are moving at about the right pace (Table 3).

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French and British Retain Confidence in U.S. Policy; Germans Evenly Divided

Confidence in the United States to deal responsibly with world problems is widespread in France (63%) and Britain (62%), with the West Germans evenly divided (49-48%).

The Soviet Union enjoys closely similar levels of confidence among the British (65%) and West Germans (47-51%), but lags well behind the U.S. in France where a plurality of only 47 percent profess confidence in the USSR.

Europeans Only Mildly Concerned Over U.S.-Soviet Condominium

Majorities of the French (71%) and German (56%) publics lack confidence that the United States is protecting their country's interests in the arms control negotiations now under way. The British are divided, 49 to 47 percent.

But in all three countries, solid majorities (ranging from 68% to 83%) declare themselves relatively unconcerned that the Soviet Union and the United States may become so close that their countries' interests will be damaged (Table 4).

Afghanistan Withdrawal Not Seen As Precedent For Eastern Europe

West European publics predominantly view the Soviet military withdrawal from Afghanistan, which started only days before the Moscow Summit, as a basic change in Soviet foreign policy, but about a third in each country think it is just a tactical move. Strong majorities expect Soviet power neither to increase nor to decrease but to remain about the same as a result of that withdrawal (Table 5).

Relatively few West Europeans (18% to 26%) think a Soviet troop withdrawal from East Europe is likely in the next five years.

No Gorbachev, No Perestroika

A plurality in France (47%) and majorities in Germany (78%) and Britain (58%) think internal reform (perestroika) in the Soviet Union was not inevitable but is being attempted only because of Mikhail Gorbachev.

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APPENDIX

Table 1:
WEST EUROPEAN ASSESSMENTS OF MOSCOW SUMMIT

A. "Now I would like to ask you a few questions about the recent meeting in Moscow between President Reagan and Soviet leader Gorbachev. First, how much have you heard or read about this meeting between the two leaders -- a great deal, a fair amount, not very much or nothing at all?"

B. "In general, how much do you think the Moscow Summit between Reagan and Gorbachev accomplished in reducing East-West tensions -- a great deal, a fair amount, not very much or nothing at all?"

C. "How much do you think the Moscow Summit accomplished in resolving regional conflicts such as in Angola and Central America -- a great deal, a fair amount, not very much or nothing at all?"

D. "And how much do you think the Moscow Summit accomplished in improving respect for individual freedoms in the Soviet Union -- a great deal, a fair amount, not very much or nothing at all?"

(Sample size:)	FRANCE (501)	GERMANY (500)	BRITAIN (505)
<u>A. Heard or read about Summit...</u>			
A great deal or fair amount	58%	52%	77%
Not very much, nothing at all	41	49	23
<u>Summit accomplished a great deal or fair amount in...</u>			
B. Reducing East-West tensions	38%	53%	77%
C. Resolving regional conflicts	9	9	19
D. Improving freedoms in USSR	27	26	43

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Table 2:
WEST EUROPEAN OPINION OF REAGAN'S RIGHTS CRITICISM IN MOSCOW

"While in Moscow, President Reagan spoke out in favor of increasing the freedom of the individual in the Soviet Union. Do you think it was appropriate or not appropriate for President Reagan to criticize the Soviet Union on this issue during the summit?"

(Sample size:)	FRANCE (501)	GERMANY (500)	BRITAIN (505)
Appropriate	52%	74%	43%
Not appropriate	33	21	53
Don't know	15	4	3
Total	100%	99%	99%

Table 3:
WEST EUROPEAN OPINION ON START NEGOTIATIONS

A. "I am going to read you several areas in which arms agreements may be reached in the future. Please tell me which one you think would do the most to enhance the peace and security of Europe:

Reduce conventional forces in Europe,
Reduce U.S. and Soviet strategic nuclear weapons, or
Reduce short-range nuclear forces in Europe."

B. "Although no treaty on reducing long-range nuclear weapons was reached at the Moscow Summit, Reagan and Gorbachev agreed to continue negotiations toward an agreement. Would you say these negotiations are moving too slowly, too fast, or about the right pace?"

(Sample size:)	FRANCE (501)	GERMANY (500)	BRITAIN (505)
<u>A. Most important arms control issue is reducing...</u>			
Conventional forces	6%	14%	10%
Strategic nuclear weapons	58	41	52
Short-range nuclear forces	14	33	28
<u>B. Negotiations to reduce long-range nuclear weapons are...</u>			
Moving too slowly	30%	38%	28%
Moving too fast	3	3	3
Moving about right	39	50	61

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Table 4:
WEST EUROPEAN OPINION ON U.S.-SOVIET "CONDOMINIUM"

"How concerned are you that the Soviet Union and the United States may become so close that (Survey Country's) interests will be damaged -- are you very concerned, fairly concerned, not very concerned, or not at all concerned?"

(Sample size:)	FRANCE (501)	GERMANY (500)	BRITAIN (505)
Very concerned	2%	5%	7%
Fairly concerned	<u>18</u> 20	<u>10</u> 15	<u>18</u> 25
Not very concerned	29	33	28
Not at all concerned	<u>39</u> 68	<u>50</u> 83	<u>44</u> 72
Don't know	<u>12</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
Total	100%	100%	100%

Table 5:
WEST EUROPEAN ASSESSMENTS OF SOVIET WITHDRAWAL
FROM AFGHANISTAN

A. "As you may know, the Soviet Union has begun to withdraw its military forces from Afghanistan. Do you think that is a tactical move or does it represent a basic change in Soviet foreign policy?"

B. "As a result of this withdrawal from Afghanistan, do you think Soviet power around the world will increase, will decrease or will remain about the same?"

(Sample size:)	FRANCE (501)	GERMANY (500)	BRITAIN (505)
<u>A. Soviet withdrawal is...</u>			
A tactical move	32%	35%	36%
A basic change in policy	46	58	55
<u>B. Soviet power will...</u>			
Increase	8%	20%	8%
Decrease	8	8	11
Remain about the same	68	65	81